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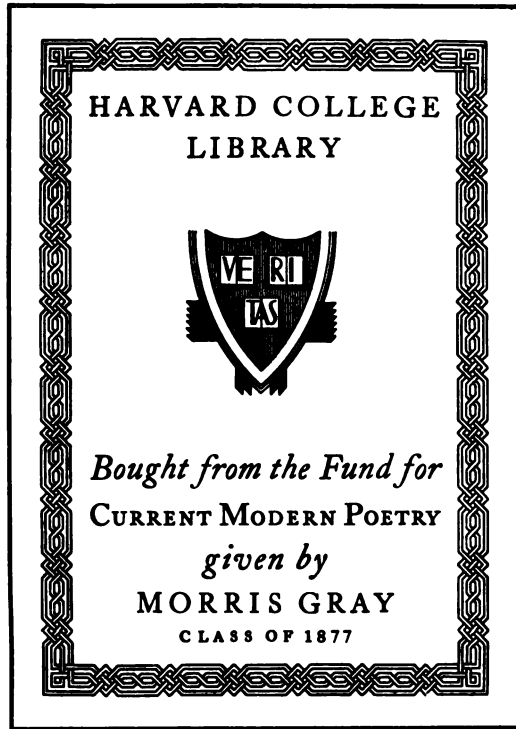
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The Path of Dreams

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The Path of Dreams



By

GEORGE MARION McCLELLAN

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JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY
Incorporated

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| The Path of Dreams..... | 1 |
| Daybreak..... | 3 |
| To Hollyhocks..... | 5 |
| Spring Dawn..... | 6 |
| The Ephemera..... | 7 |
| The Hills of Sewanee..... | 8 |
| Hydromel and Rue..... | 9 |
| Dogwood Blossoms..... | 10 |
| The April of Alabama..... | 11 |
| The Bride of Nitta Yuma..... | 12 |
| A September Night..... | 15 |
| The Harvest Moon..... | 16 |
| The Sun Went Down in Beauty..... | 17 |
| Love is a Flame..... | 18 |
| The Feet of Judas..... | 19 |
| To Lochiel..... | 20 |
| To Theodore..... | 21 |
| In The Heart of a Rose..... | 22 |
| A January Dandelion..... | 23 |
| A Belated Oriole..... | 23 |
| Eternity..... | 25 |
| A Psyche of Spring..... | 26 |
| May Along the Cumberland..... | 27 |
| The Secret..... | 28 |
| A Serenade..... | 29 |
| A Butterfly in Church..... | 30 |
| As Sifted Wheat..... | 31 |
| A New Year's Greeting to a College Senior..... | 32 |
| Estranged..... | 33 |
| A Decoration Day..... | 34 |

| | Page |
|---|------|
| June..... | 36 |
| Heart Yearnings..... | 38 |
| A Faithless Love..... | 39 |
| The Bridal Wreath's Lament..... | 41 |
| Sustaining Hope..... | 44 |
| The Woods of October..... | 45 |
| Youthful Delusions..... | 47 |
| The March's Promise..... | 49 |
| A Meadow-Land..... | 50 |
| In Summer..... | 51 |
| In Memory of Katie Reynolds, Dying..... | 53 |
| Lines to Mount Glen..... | 54 |
| The Legend of Tannhauser: | |
| I The Venusburg..... | 61 |
| II The Contest of Love and Song..... | 66 |
| III The Pilgrimage and Staff..... | 72 |

The Path of Dreams



Sweet-scented winds move inward from the shore,
Blythe is the air of June with silken gleams,
My roving fancy treads at will once more,
The golden path of dreams.

Along the sloping uplands yellow wheat
Is bending to the honied breath of June,
While all the lowlands slumber at my feet
This glorious afternoon.

To balmy gusts from blue-girt breezy hills
The clover blossoms nod with graceful art,
And all the mystery of living thrills
The ever pulsing heart.

A boon to lovers still, the sweet wild rose
Adds perfume to the languor in the air,
And whispering Zephyr scatters as she goes
Sweet atters everywhere.

The wild birds restlessly from tree to tree,
Flit ceaselessly beneath the sunlit skies,
And give a sumptuous afternoon to me,
In song and gladsome cries.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Blue gauze the empty distances enfold;
The stream-fed glens lie bare in loveliness,
And waves of light along the paths of gold
The glens and hills caress.

In garish light the rustling, shimmering corn,
The trembling leaves, the passing winds caress,
And in the heart a subtle throb is born
Of mighty tenderness.

Vague yearnings, tenderness that prompt to tears
And fill the heart with mingled pain and bliss,
Come down to men through many thousand years,
On afternoons like this.

What is there in the vistas, song, and flower,
That prompt alike to happiness and tears,
Unites life's scattered visions in the hour
Of past and present years?

Is it the throb of life on soft hill slopes,
A thousand passions burned to fever heat
Spread out in shimmering glows that run to hopes,
For some fulfillment sweet?

Some half fulfillment yet of vanished gleams,
Of vanished promises when love's wild glow
Made fervid youth a tenement of dreams
Back in the long ago.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

DAYBREAK

Awake! arise! Oh, men of my race,
I see our morning star,
And feel the dawn-breeze on my face
Creep inward, from afar.

I feel the dawn, with soft-like tread,
Steal through our lingering night,
Aglow with flame our sky to spread
In floods of morning light.

Arise! my men, be wide awake
To hear the bugle call,
For Negroes everywhere to break
The bands that bind us all.

Great Lincoln, now with glory graced,
All God-like with the pen,
Our chattel fetters broke, and placed
Us in the ranks of men.

But even he could not awake
The dead, nor make alive,
Nor change stern nature's laws which make
The fittest to survive.

Let every man his soul inure,
In noblest sacrifice,
And with a heart of oak endure,
Ignoble, arrant prejudice.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Endurance, love, will yet prevail
Against all laws of hate;
Such armaments can never fail
Our race its best estate.

Let none make common cause with sin,
Be that in honor bound,
For they who fight with God must win
On every battle ground.

Though wrongs there are, and wrongs have been,
And wrongs we still must face,
We have more friends than foes within
The Anglo-Saxon race.

In spite of all the babel cries,
Of those who rage and shout,
God's silent forces daily rise
To bring His will about.

Our portion is, and yet will be,
To drink a bitter cup
In many things, yet all must see
The race is moving up.

Oh! men of my race, awake! arise!
Our morning's in the air,
There's scarlet all along the skies,
Our day breaks everywhere.

TO HOLLYHOCKS

Gay hollyhocks with flaming bells
And waving plumes, as gently swells
The breeze upon the Summer air; .
You bind me still with magic spells
When to the wind, in grave farewells,
You bow in all your graces fair.

You bring me back the childhood view,
Where arching skies and deepest blue
Stretch on in endless lengths above;
To see you so awakes anew
Long past emotions, from which grew
My wild and first heart-throbs of love.

There is in all your brilliant dyes,
Your gorgeousness and azure skies,
A joy like soothing summer rain;
Yet in the scene there vaguely lies
A something half akin to sighs,
Along the borderland of pain.

SPRING DAWN

There comes to my heart from regions remote
A wild desire for the hedge and the brush,
Whenever I hear the first wild note
Of the meadow lark and the hermit thrush.

The broken and upturned earth to the air,
By a million thrusting blades of Spring,
Sends out from the sod and everywhere
Its pungent aromas over everything.

Then it's Oh, for the hills, the dawn, and the dew,
The breath of the fields and the silent lake,
And watching the wings of light burst through
The scarlet blush of the new daybreak.

It is then, when the earth still nestles in sleep,
And the robes of light are scarce unfurled,
You can almost feel, in its mighty sweep,
The onward rush and roll of the world.

THE EPHEMERA

Creatures of gauze and velvet wings,
With life for one brief day,
Dancing and flitting where the breezes fling
The sweets of blooming May;
Skimming the stream where the wild thyme grows,
You dart with keen delight,
Only to die when the sweet wild rose
Gives perfume to the night.

Weary at last, when the day is done,
Of the breeze and clover's breath,
Folding your delicate wings with the sun,
You gently drop to death;
Glimmering wings and a few short hours
Were yours in sweet delight,
Living for a day in the world of flowers,
And then—everlasting night.

Creatures of gauze and velvet wings,
With a day of gleams and flowers,
Who knows—in the light of eternal things—
Your life is less than ours?
Weary at last, it is ours, like you,
When our brief day is done,
Folding our hands, to say adieu,
And pass with the setting sun.

THE HILLS OF SEWANEE

Sewanee Hills of dear delight,
 Prompting my dreams that used to be,
I know you are waiting me still tonight
 By the Unika Range of Tennessee.

The blinking stars in endless space,
 The broad moonlight and silvery gleams,
Tonight caress your wind-swept face,
 And fold you in a thousand dreams.

Your far outlines, less seen than felt,
 Which wind with hill propensities,
In moonlight dreams I see you melt
 Away in vague immensities.

And, far away, I still can feel
 Your mystery that ever speaks
Of vanished things, as shadows steal
 Across your breast and rugged peaks.

O, dear blue hills, that lie apart,
 And wait so patiently down there,
Your peace takes hold upon my heart
 And makes its burden less to bear.

HYDROMEL AND RUE

Lord, let me live to serve and make a loan
Of life and soul in love to my heart's own.
And what if they should never care or know
How dark sometimes and weary are the ways,
How piercing cold and pitiless the snow,
How desolate and lonely are the days
Which life for me holds sometimes in reserve?
And what if those I love esteem above
Me, others all untried and far less true,
And lightly barter off my wealth of love
For careless, strange, and passing comrades new?
Oh Lord, those, whom I love, I still would serve.

To be permitted, once in this short life,
To hold a little child close to my heart
In fatherhood, as mine, is worth all strife
Which circumstance and time to me impart.
To know the bliss of chaste and holy love,
To have one friend to even half divine
My hungry heart, is heaven from above
Come to this ever-longing soul of mine.

And so, dear Lord, I thank Thee for the cup
Of hydromel Thou givest me to sup,
Though rue and hyssop pass my lips and fill
My life with earthly sorrow, grief, and pain,
In faith my soul will rise to thank Thee still
For garish day, for guerdon and its gain.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And though through time insentient clay, the
sward,
My erstwhile form may hold; for joy, for life,
For everlasting love, sunshine and rain,
My ardent heart above all earthly strife,
Unbound in space, soars up through joy and pain
Triumphantly, in thanks to Thee, dear Lord.

DOGWOOD BLOSSOMS

To dreamy languors and the violet mist
Of early Spring, the deep sequestered vale
Gives first her paling-blue Miamimist,
Where blithely pours the cuckoo's annual tale
Of Summer promises and tender green,
Of a new life and beauty yet unseen.
The forest trees have yet a sighing mouth,
Where dying winds of March their branches swing,
While upward from the dreamy sunny South,
A hand invisible leads on the Spring.

His rounds from bloom to bloom the bee begins
With flying song, and cowslip wine he sups,
Where to the warm and passing southern winds,
Azaleas gently swing their yellow cups.
Soon everywhere, with glory through and through,
The fields will spread with every brilliant hue.
But high o'er all the early floral train,
Where softness all the arching sky resumes,
The dogwood dancing to the winds' refrain,
In stainless glory spreads its snowy blooms.

THE APRIL OF ALABAMA

Fair Alabama, "Here we rest," thy name—
And in this stretch of oak and spotted ash,
Well said that long past swarthy tribe who came
Here, "Alabama," in these glamour wilds.
To-day thy April woods have had for me
A thousand charms, elusive loveliness,
That melt in shimmering views which flash
From leaves and buds in half-grown daintiness.
From every tree and living thing there smiles
A touch of Summer's glory yet to be.
Already overhead the sky resumes
Its Summer softness, and a hand of light
All through the woods has beckoned with its blooms
Of honeysuckle wild and dogwood white
As bridal robes.

With bashful azure eyes
All full of dew-born, laughing, falling tears,
The violets more blue than summer skies
Are rioting in vagrancy around
Beneath old oaks, old pines, and sending out
Like prodigals their sweets to spicy airs.
And, as to-day, this loveliness for years
Unknown has come and gone. To-day it wears
Its pageantry of youth with sylvan sound
Of many forest tribes which fairly shout
Their ecstasies. But soon with Summer smiles
Will such a gorgeousness of flaming hues
Bedeck these Alabama glamour wilds
As ever burst to life by rain and dews.

THE BRIDE OF NITTA YUMA.

Softly the cool breath of the early morning,
Swamp-scented air, fragrant with deep lagoons
And water lilies, stole on through the fields
Of cotton, whispering a sighing song.
'Twas Sunday morning then, and everywhere
The May dew rolled away in diadems.
Another day was born with floods of light;
The grass with newer green all wet with dew
Gave welcoming. And rose hues spent with yesterday
Found blushes still, and sent out night-born sweets
To mingle with a thousand other spicy
Airs, and perfumes of the jessamine,
And wild aromas of the Summer air.
And murmured low the sycamore overhead
With whisperings of passing Summer winds.
The dapple sunshine gleamed and kissed their leaves,
And golden gleams were on the fields. Rich were
The blackbird's notes, and joyous sounds from all
The feathered tribes. In lazy lengths the bayou went
With stretches on, and murmuring low songs
Like those of love. There floated far and wide
The queenly water lilies—white, perfuming
All the Sunday air.

And, like a dove
Of peace, fair Nitta Yuma sat amid
Her spreading figs and rich magnolia blooms,
In rest; for there was come the hallowed day,

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The Sabbath of the Lord. The church bell pealed
To far plantations for her worshippers.
They came in straggling bands through cotton fields
And shady lanes. Upon their faces, young
And old, was seen a keen expectancy,
And eagerness. It was the wedding day
Of sweet Alicia Bell, the fairest maid,
And most beloved of all the country side.
And when the preacher called the happy pair
To stand and take their vows, no costly veil
Resplendent in transparency enwrapped
The dusky bride, nor great Cathedral gleamed
In rich mosaics, nor stately pillars carved,
To mark the elegance and luxury
Where come the great, the lordly, and the rich,
To take their marriage vows. But love was there
And hope, and youth, to guide and lead them forth
To their new world. And to his humble home,
With whitewashed walls, the bridegroom led his bride.
The wedding feast of simple fare was theirs
Alone. Through all the golden afternoon
They took their bridal tour, still hand in hand,
Love ever leading on, through cotton fields,
Along the bayou's side, until their feet
Led to the forest old, where man first loved,
First wooed, first won a bride and made a home.
Gently the spirit of the ancient forest
Wove her magic spell around them, till,
As one, they had no further need of speech.
They were no longer twain, and on, as one,

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Slowly they walked through the fragrant and green
woods—

Woods sun-stained, and peaceful, where all nature
Fused her mellow beauty into one
Harmonious whole. Softened and blended colors
Gleamed in vistas and in open glades;
Delicious murmurs, inarticulate,
Soothing all the senses, crept in quiet,
Even undertones all through the forest,
Whispering primeval memories,
Primeval mysteries of ages past.
Once more the ancient forest, dim and silent,
Throbbled with energy and unseen life,
Where sunshine fell among the moist ferns,
Gleamed on silent pools and altars lost.
Again the musty fragrance of the forest mould
Greeted the nostrils of fauns and dryads
Unseen, and all the fairy forest lived
Once more, commingling with their murmurings
The past and present. Here primordial love
Walked hand in hand through Paradise anew.

A SEPTEMBER NIGHT

The full September moon sheds floods of light,
And all the bayou's face is gemmed with stars,
Save where are dropped fantastic shadows down
From sycamore and moss-hung cypress trees.
With slumberous sound the waters half asleep
Creep on and on their way, 'twixt rankish reeds,
Through marsh and lowlands stretching to the Gulf.
Begirt with cotton fields, Anguilla sits
Half bird-like, dreaming on her Summer nest.
Amid her spreading figs and roses, still
In bloom with all their Spring and Summer hues,
Pomegranates hang with dapple cheeks full ripe,
And over all the town a dreamy haze
Drops down. The great plantations, stretching far
Away, are plains of cotton, downy white.
O, glorious is this night of joyous sounds;
Too full for sleep. Aromas wild and sweet,
From muscadine, late blooming jessamine,
And roses, all the heavy air suffuse.
Faint bellows from the alligators come
From swamps afar, where sluggish lagoons give
To them a peaceful home. The katydids
Make ceaseless cries. Ten thousand insects' wings
Stir in the moonlight haze and joyous shouts
Of Negro song and mirth awake hard by
The cabin dance. O, glorious is this night!
The Summer sweetness fills my heart with songs,
I can not sing, with loves I can not speak.

THE HARVEST MOON

The dark magnolia leaves and spreading fig
With green luxuriant beauty all their own,
Stirless, hang heavy-coated with the dew,
Which swift and iridescent gleams shoot through
As if a thousand brilliant diamonds shone.
Afloat the lagoon, water-lilies white
In sweets with muscadines perfume the night.
A song bird restless chants a fleeting lay;
Asleep on all the swamp and bayou lies
A peaceful, blissful moonlight, mystic haze,
A dreaminess o'er all the landscape plays,
While lake and lagoon mirror all the skies.
There is a glory doomed to pass too soon,
That lies subdued beneath the harvest moon.

THE SUN WENT DOWN IN BEAUTY

The sun went down in beauty
 Beyond the Mississippi side,
As I stood on the banks of the river
 And watched its waters glide;
Its swelling currents resembling
 The longing restless soul,
Surging, swelling, and pursuing
 Its ever receding goal.

The sun went down in beauty,
 But the restless tide flowed on,
And the phantom of absent loved ones
 Danced on the waves and were gone;
Fleeting phantoms of loved ones,
 Their faces jubilant with glee,
In the spray seemed to rise and beckon,
 And then rush on to the sea.

The sun went down in beauty,
 While I stood musing alone,
Stood watching the rushing river
 And heard its restless moan;
Longings, vague, intenable,
 So far from speech apart,
Like the endless rush of the river,
 Went surging through my heart.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The sun went down in beauty,
Peacefully sank to rest,
Leaving its golden reflection
On the great Mississippi's breast;
Gleaming on the turbulent river,
In the coming gray twilight,
Soothing its restless surging,
And kissing its waters goodnight.

LOVE IS A FLAME

Love is a flame that burns with sacred fire,
And fills the being up with sweet desire;
Yet, once the altar feels love's fiery breath,
The heart must be a crucible till death.

Say love is life; and say it not amiss,
That love is but a synonym for bliss.
Say what you will of love, in what refrain,
But knows the heart, 'tis but a word for pain.

THE FEET OF JUDAS

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
The dark and evil passions of his soul,
His secret plot, and sordidness complete,
His hate, his purposing, Christ knew the whole,
And still in love he stooped and washed his feet.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
Yet all his lurking sin was bare to him,
His bargain with the priest, and more than this,
In Olivet, beneath the moonlight dim,
Aforehand knew and felt his treacherous kiss.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
And so ineffable his love 'twas meet,
That pity fill his great forgiving heart,
And tenderly to wash the traitor's feet,
Who in his Lord had basely sold his part.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
And thus a girded servant, self-abased,
Taught that no wrong this side the gate of heaven
Was ever too great to wholly be effaced,
And though unasked, in spirit be forgiven.

And so if we have ever felt the wrong
Of trampled rights, of caste, it matters not,
What e'er the soul has felt or suffered long,
Oh, heart! this one thing should not be forgot:
Christ washed the feet of Judas.

TO LOCHIEL

Dear little babe, of all born things alive,
Most helpless thou—of life a slender thread.
Can such as thee so rough a sea survive,
And come at last the way all feet must tread?
Yea! by the God whom I adore above,
If I could fix thy destiny by choice
Thou wouldst be safe, my little love.

'Tis Love ineffable I wrap thee in
To pitiless pain, and ache, and storm, and blast,
I'd bare my soul to save thy feet from sin,
And bring thee safely home, Lochiel, at last.
But, in thy chancing boon of birth, thy whole
And everlasting destiny of life
Lies in thy self-directing soul.

TO THEODORE

Such are the little memories of you;
They come and go, return and lie apart
From all main things of life; yet more than they,
With noiseless feet, they come and grip the heart.
Gay laughter leading quick and stormy tears,
Then smiles again and pulse of flying feet,
In breathless chase of fleeting gossamers,
Are memories so dear, so bitter-sweet.

No more are echoes of your flying feet.
Hard by, where Pike's Peak rears its head in state,
The erstwhile rushing feet, with halting steps,
For health's return in Denver watch and wait.
But love and memories of noiseless tread,
Where angels hovered once, all shining fair,
To tuck you in your little trundle bed,
Kneel nightly now in agony of prayer.

Feb. 22, 1916.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

IN THE HEART OF A ROSE

I will hide my soul and its mighty love
In the bosom of this rose,
And its dispensing breath will take
My love wherever it goes.

And perhaps she'll pluck this very rose,
And, quick as blushes start,
Will breathe my hidden secret in
Her unsuspecting heart.

And there I will live in her embrace
And the realm of sweetness there,
Enamored with an ecstasy
Of bliss beyond compare.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

A JANUARY DANDELION

All Nashville is a-chill! And everywhere,
As wind-swept sands upon the deserts blow,
There is, each moment, sifted through the air
A powered blast of January snow.
O thoughtless dandelion! to be misled
By a few warm days to leave thy natural bed
Was folly growth and blooming over soon.
And yet, thou blasted, yellow-coated gem!
Full many hearts have but a common boon
With thee, now freezing on thy slender stem.
When once the heart-blooms by love's fervid breath
Is left, and chilling snow is sifted in,
It still may beat, but there is blast and death
To all that blooming life that might have been.

A BELATED ORIOLE

Gay little songster of the Spring,
This is an evil hour,
For one so light of heart and wing
To face the storms that lower.

December winds blow on the lea
A chill that threatens harm,
With not a leaf on bush or tree
To shield thee from the storm.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Why hast thou lingered here so late
To face the storms that rise,
When all thy kind, and yellow mate,
Have sought for southern skies?

Hast thou, like me, some fortune ill
To bind thee to this spot?
Made to endure, against thy will,
A melancholy lot?

Chill is the air with windy sighs,
A prophecy that blows,
Of cold and inhospitable skies,
Of bitter frost and snows.

But there is One whose power it is
To temper blast and storm,
And love to give a bird is His,
And keep it safe from harm.

To Him thy helplessness will plead,
To Him I lift a prayer,
For we alike have common need
Of His great love and care.

ETERNITY

Rock me to sleep, ye waves, and drift my boat,
With undulations soft, far out to sea;
Perchance, where sky and wave wear one blue coat,
My heart shall find some hidden rest remote.
My spirit swoons, and all my senses cry
For ocean's breast and covering of the sky.
Rock me to sleep, ye waves, and, outward bound,
Just let me drift far out from toil and care,
Where lapping of the waves shall be the sound
Which, mingled with the winds that gently bear
Me on between a peaceful sea and sky,
To make my soothing, slumberous lullaby.
Thus drifting on and on upon thy breast,
My heart shall go to sleep and rest, and rest.

A PSYCHE OF SPRING

Thou gaily painted butterfly, exquisite thing,
A child of light and blending rainbow hues,
In loveliness a Psyche of the Spring,
Companion for the rose and diamond dews;
'Tis thine, in sportive joy, from hour to hour,
To ride the breeze from flower to flower.

But thou wast once a worm of hueless dye.
Now, seeing thee, gay thing, afloat in bliss,
I take new hope in thoughts of bye and bye,
When I, as thou, have shed my chrysalis.
I dream now of eternal springs of light
In which, as thou, I too may have my flight.

MAY ALONG THE CUMBERLAND

Embodiment of all the beautiful
That crowns the year, O May! is come with thee.
For miles and miles along the rugged hills,
Where in and out the Cumberland must wind,
And Spring her first response of green doth find,
A rapt'rous beauty all the valley fills.
The yellow sun with Summer at his heels,
Betokeneth the time about to be,
Siestas, days and nights alive with wings,
The stirring of a million living things.

The month is full of roses, perfumed air,
And crooning bees upon the clover's breast,
The morning woodlands ring with music sweet;
The zephyrs whisper to the corn,
And echo back the hills the dinner horn,
But all in tune and harmony complete.
In blissful self-abandonment awhile,
Here on thy lap, sweet May, O! let me rest,
And dream, and dream, till, lulled by sight and sound,
In unison to all the earth around.

THE SECRET

Go, whisper to her gentle winds,
While you are passing by,
The mighty secret of my heart,
The burden of my sigh.

Take to her from this blushing rose
Such sweets of scented air
As are befitting for a queen,
And one divinely fair.

And from this lily of the vale
Take her, who is to me,
The emblem of all that is good,
And sweetest purity.

The violets of azure eyes,
Which ever sweets impart,
Take her their gentle modesty,
So like her guileless heart.

Take all the sweets which you can find
Along your airy way,
To her whose face and daily life
Are like the month of May.

Blow softly on her lovely brow,
And give her lips a kiss,
The thing were I to do, O winds!
Would count a wonderous bliss.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

She does not know my secret flame,
But what is that to you
Oh, winds? but take her from my heart
Its mighty love and true.

A SERENADE

Dear heart, I would that thou couldst know
How, like the burning glow of Mars,
My love here keeps a watch below
Thy window and the midnight stars.

How sweet the breath of night is now,
Of sweets the rose and jessamine keep;
Go, winds, with these and kiss her brow,
And bear my love to her in sleep.

Oh, such a love! that loves her so,
With such a little space apart,
Should through yon open casement go,
And gently stir her dreaming heart.

Dear heart, sleep on without a fear,
If all unconsciously to thee,
My love must watch, to watch so near,
Makes even that a bliss to me.

A BUTTERFLY IN CHURCH.

What dost thou here, thou shining, sinless thing,
With many colored hues and shapely wing?
Why quit the open field and Summer air
To flutter here? Thou hast no need of prayer.

'Tis mete that we, who this great structure built,
Should come to be redeemed and washed from guilt,
For we this gilded edifice within
Are come, with erring hearts and stains of sin.

But thou art free from guilt as God on high;
Go, seek the blooming waste and open sky,
And leave us here our secret woes to bear,
Confessionals and agonies of prayer.

AS SIFTED WHEAT

O sift me, Lord, and make me
Clean as sifted wheat;
My soul, an empty vessel, bring
To my Redeemer's feet.
However sinful I have been or be,
Thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee.

I am so closely hedged about,
Oh, Christ! as thou hast been;
My soul, hemmed in with flesh,
Is so in love with sin.
Sin stained am I, but sift me, Lord, complete,
And make me clean as sifted wheat.

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING TO A
COLLEGE SENIOR

Soft winds and a moving tide
May bear you on, I pray,
With the love of God to guide
Through the year to your B. A.

On the shores of heavenly grace,
Or the crest of the ocean's swell,
May the smile of the Father's face
Be the sign that all is well.

In storms, whenever they rise,
Cling close to the pilot of prayer,
Keep faith under blackest of skies
That the love of God is there.

ESTRANGED

An Autumn sky, a pleasant weather;
The asters blossom by the way;
We two between them walk together,
And watch the ships pass on the bay.

His Summer song yet to the clover,
The hovering bee still murmurs there,
But there's that tells that Summer's over
In this sweet, dreamy, Autumn air.

When it was May and lovely weather,
And ships went sailing to the west,
We walked this path, we two together,
With happy throbs of heart and breast.

The Spring was young and hope was growing,
And love went idling on the sand,
And there was blissful overflowing
Of heart in touch of lip and hand.

And yet the bee hums to the clover
Soft, all the dreamy hours long,
But there's that tells that Summer's over
In all his drowsy, flying song.

An Autumn sky, a pleasant weather,
But all the Summer glow is changed
Here, where in love we walked together,
Before we two were so estranged.

A DECORATION DAY

The reign of death was there,
Where swept the Winter winds with
pipes and moans,
And, stretched in silence bare,
A colonnade of gray sepulchral stones.

But then it was in May,
And all the fields were bright and gay
with tune
That Decoration Day,
And blossoms wore their hues and breath
of June.

A motley crowd that came,
But who more fit than they that once
were slaves,
Despised, unknown to fame,
With love should decorate the
soldiers' graves?

Black feet trod cheerily
From out the town in crowds or
stragglng bands,
And flowers waved and flaunted merrily
From little Negro hands.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And far, far away
From home and love, deep in a silent
bed,
Beneath the sky of May,
Was sleeping there, in solitude, the dead.

But for the hearts that day
Who in the distant North was sore and
sighed,
Black hands, with sweets of May,
Made green the graves of those who for
them died.

JUNE

The June has come with all its brilliant dyes,
Its honeyed breath, its balmy gusts and sighs.
In fields and stretching uplands, glade and glen,
And by the high and lowly haunts of men,
With all-surpassing glory bloom the flowers,
And come are sun-lit skies and dreamy hours.
The morning earth is all begemmed with dew,
The toiling bee, the blissful hours through,
Hums softly on his self-beguiling tune,
While gathers he the sweetest sweets of June.
Low murmuring, the crystal brooklet leads
Its way through fields and lane and emerald meads.
The clover fields are red and sweetly scent
The pasture lands, where browse the kine content.
The corn is swayed with breezes passing by,
And everywhere the bloom is on the rye.
Already on the bearded wheat is seen
The gold which tempts the farmer's sickle keen,
And I can almost see the gleaming blade
By which the golden grain is lowly laid,
And hear the singing scythe and tramp of feet,
And see the cone-shaped shocks of gathered wheat.
All shimmering the landscapes far and wide
Bespeak fair promise for the harvest-tide.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The June has come with Summer skies and glow,
Reflecting bliss and Junes of long ago—
Bare feet, and careless roving bands of boys
That haunted lake and stream in halcyon joys,
The bow and arrow, hunting ground and snares,
The sudden flight of quails and skulking hares,
The wild and joyous shouts along the glen
Come back in all the month of June again.
Then other days and solitary dreams,
Are come again with flash of flaming gleams,
Where red birds shot across the opening glades,
In quest of deeper thickets, deeper shades.
The soft sunshine comes down aslant the hills,
With perfume sweet the honeysuckle fills,
The Summer atmosphere for miles around,
And all the groves and fields are sweet with sound.
Soft tinkling bells of flocks and browsing herds,
The rippling streams and restless twittering birds,
Unite with children's voices in their shout
Of mirth and joy on all the sward about.
A nameless charm, a bliss, a merry tune
Abideth in the country lap of June.
While hills, and woods, and vale, and grassy slope,
Are teeming everywhere with life and hope.
The brook's low murmuring the morning through,
Is still a lullaby, and love is true,
In earth, and sky, and air, in dale and glen,
For all the changing, faithless sons of men.
The June has come with all its brilliant dyes,
Its honied breath, its balmy gusts and sighs.

HEART YEARNINGS

Oh! for the welcome breath of country air,
With Summer skies and flowers,
To shout and feel once more the halcyon
Of gayer boyhood hours.
I think the sight of fields and shady lanes
Would ease my heart of pains.

To cool once more my thirst, where bubbled up
The waters of a spring,
Where I have seen the golden daffodils
And lillies flourishing,
My fevered heart would more than half forget
Its sighs, and vain regret.

Far, far away, from early scenes am I;
And, too, my youth has fled;
For me a stranger's land, a stranger's sky,
That arches overhead.
For scenes and joys that now have passed me by,
I can but give a sigh.

A FAITHLESS LOVE

The lovely May has come at last,
With songs and gleaming dews,
And apple blossoms bursting out
With evanescent hues.

A newer life, a newer charm,
Is bursting every hour,
With pledge and faithful promises,
From leaf and bud and flower.

And hope is growing on the hill,
And blooming in the vale;
And comes new vigor and new life
On every passing gale.

But O, my heart! my heart of hearts!
What hope is there for me? ~~For~~
For what was hope and what was joy,
For me have ceased to be.

The woodlark's tender warbling lay,
Which flows with melting art,
Is but a trembling song of love
That serves to break my heart.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Gay flowers burst on every side,
The fairest of the fair,
But what are these to any heart
That's breaking with despair?

O May! my heart had found a rose
As lovely as the morn,
Which charmed awhile, then faithless went,
But left with me its thorn.

THE BRIDAL WREATH'S LAMENT

O! woe, ah! bitter woe for us,
Who did the foolish thing,
To trust our folded leaves and buds
To the first warm sun of Spring.

Up from the lagoons of the South,
From lake and flowers about,
Came soft, deceitful, sighing winds
And gently called us out.

They whispered strange Floridian tales,
Of bayous and the brake,
Of Spring's aroma and the rose,
And bade us to awake.

The sun, so old of many Springs,
Looked down on us and smiled,
And all our foolish swelling buds
To leaf and flower beguiled.

We rivaled the Japonicas
Which budded half in doubt,
But reassured by southern winds,
Fast sought to beat us out.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And O! we spread our leaves and buds
Up to the open sky,
And looked with condescension on
Our lagging neighbors by.

Bedecked in all our finery,
And blind with foolish pride,
We laughed unconscious of our doom,
And of our woe betide.

But swift and stealthily as comes
A lurking foe at night,
Without a warning note swept down
A storm with bitter blight.

Now all the highway and the plain
Lie covered up with snow,
The sun is hid and leaden clouds,
Look down on all below.

Deceitful zephyrs of the south,
Where are your kisses now?
The snowflakes make our winding sheet,
And death is on our brow.

But soon the true warm Spring will come,
And violets in their beds
Will bloom: And flauntingly will
Lift the tulips up their heads.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The gladsome Summer-time will come,
The Summer winds will sigh,
A thousand brilliant flowers will bloom
Beneath a Summer sky.

But we, O vain and foolish buds!
Who did the foolish thing,
To trust our folded leaves and flowers
To the first warm sun of Spring,
So premature must pass away
To nothingness for time and aye.

SUSTAINING HOPE

Farewell, Dearest and Best!
What matters it whether the name be Dove,
Dear-heart, and all sweet words at love's behest,
Since none can voice my love?

To stay is past my power;
Oh, love, my own Dear-heart, farewell, good-bye!
For thee I'll breathe through every passing hour
A fond and secret sigh.

But, Dear, though it be long,
This hope 'mid distant scenes and fellow-men
Will lead me on, in solitude or throng,
That we shall meet again.

THE WOODS OF OCTOBER

The last sweet blush of Summer in her glory
Still lingers in October woods and skies,
But changed in forest, hills, and mountains hoary,
From green into a thousand brilliant dyes.

The cloudless skies a restful peace betoken,
The Indian Summer broodeth over all,
In earth and everywhere is plainly spoken
A placidness which only comes with Fall.

In fields, where to the breeze was lately swaying
The wheat in all its golden beauty seen,
Are flocks and herds of lazy cattle straying,
And feeding on a second growth of green.

A bee is seen still out in hope of finding
A blossom in the second growth of clover,
But nature's law, too, on the bee is binding,
His harvesting will also soon be over.

A few more days of Autumn's hazy gleaming,
And all October woods, to-day so fair,
The very imagery of death in seeming
Will stand, dismantled, naked, bare.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

O! who would think that all this beauty, painted
Upon these leaves in colors clear
In every brilliant hue, with death is tainted,
But for the dying lesson year by year?

That lesson let me learn to-day in earnest,
Which thou dost teach in every hue and dye;
Who knows but when thy glory here returnest,
Within the silent grave my head shall lie?

Farewell, October woods—soon bleak December
Will all the forest wrap in spotless snow,
But I, forgetting not, shall still remember
Thy glory, which to-day delights me so.

YOUTHFUL DELUSIONS

And where now, restless, wilt thou roam,
Thou young, uneaseful heart?
'Tis better far to stay at home,
So young a stripling as thou art.
And thinkest thou to go
Abroad to taste the sweets of life,
And miss its lurking woe?

Yea, doubtless thou wouldst find a bliss
Of honey sweet, awhile,
And many a love-born, smothered kiss,
Unknown to thee erstwhile.
And of a thousand hues
Would blossoms give the morning sweets
With honey-dabbled dews.

And, all-believing heart and young,
Thou wouldst unfold thy best
To faith, and laugh till thou wert stung
With poison in thy breast.
Then who would be thee nigh,
So far from home, to heal thy pain
And soothe thy bitter cry?

THE PATH OF DREAMS

'Tis best, by far, to stay at home,
Dear, over-trusting heart;
None but a prodigal may roam
So far from love apart.
Doubt not, abide thy day,
And what is best for thee to have
In time will come thy way.

THE MARCH'S PROMISE

When gray clouds break on southern skies
And winds of March begin to blow,
Our fancies run to Summer sighs,
That whisper and delight us so.

For in this stormy month of winds
The first new pulse of life is felt,
When Spring with all her sweets begins
Where Winter's ice and snow have dwelt.

The bluebird carols out his note,
A prelude to the country 'round
Of chimes, a few more days remote,
To which the forest will resound.

The plowman's song, the forest chime,
The upturned sod, the country scene,
Bespeak a resurrection time
In air, sky, and sprouting green.

O, blessed hope of life anew!
That comes from death when Spring begins;
Life after death, a promise true,
Is brought in March's stormy winds.

A MEADOW-LAND.

Delight of keen delights in Summer hours,
Is this long meadowy scene,
All rioting in festival of flowers
And pageantry of green,
With smiling skies above and Summer blue,
With ancient fields below, yet ever new.

Thou mindest me of other scenes and days,
In sunnier climes than thine,
Of mocking birds and ever piping lays,
Of figs and muscadine,
Of dreamy afternoons and dreamy love
In silent bliss, with southern skies above.

Dear meadow-lands, it makes me sigh to know
That this fair scene must die,
And sleep long months beneath the frost and snow,
And inhospitable sky;
And yet why should I sigh and yield to pain,
Since all thy loveliness will bloom again?

For long before the red men trod thy soil,
Or white men came to till
Thy blooming waste, and crown with patient toil
Surrounding vale and hill,
All rioting with gleeful, vagrant flowers
Wert thou in bloom, through long and sunny hours.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

'Tis mine to lie beneath a changeless snow,
How sad to me the truth,
But thine to sleep awhile, and wake to know
A gay immortal youth.
For thou, when I back to the dust have gone,
With festive face, will still be smiling on.

IN SUMMER

The Summer shimmering to-day
Puts on the earth a rune,
Which blends in magic waves of light,
Beneath the sky of June.

Along the pavements of the street,
And in the crowded mart,
There is a joy of Summer-time,
A comforting of heart.

To-day one hardly can believe,
Along these pavements old,
That March held such an icy sway
Of bitterness and cold.

The little gamin of the street,
Full keeping with the boy,
Forgetting all his Winter woes,
Is hallooing for joy.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And I go back to youth again,
And get myself away,
To where the country fields are in
The green and blue of May.

And on I sweetly glide with them,
With changing song and tune.
With bursting buds and brilliant dyes,
That line the lap of June.

The morning trembles with its throbs
Of ever-gushing notes,
Which pour with shuddering sweetness from
A thousand feathered throats.

'Tis true the shadows of four walls
Are ever on me cast,
But they have a transparency
To me of a sweet past.

IN MEMORY OF KATIE REYNOLDS,
DYING.

O Death!
If thou hath aught of tenderness,
Be kindly in thy touch
Of her whose fragile slenderness
Was overburdened much
With life. And let her seem to go to sleep,
As often does a tired child, when it has grown
Too tired to longer weep.

A rose but half in bloom—
She is too young and beautiful to die,
But yet, if she must go,
Let her go out as goes a sigh
From tired life and woe.
And let her keep, in death's brief space
This side the grave, the dusky beauty still
Belonging to her face.

She must have been
Of those upon the trembling lyre
Of whom the poets sung;
"Whom the gods love" and desire
Fade and "die young."
Her life so loved on earth was brief,
But yet withal so beautiful there is no cause,
But in our loss, for grief.

LINES TO MOUNT GLEN

In this soft air perfumed with blooming May,
Stretched at thy feet on the green grass, Old Glen,
It is a joy unspeakable to me
To see again thy face and friendly crags.
My childhood friend, then height of heights to me,
I am come home to worship thee once more,
And feel that bliss in indolent repose
Of those long past delightful afternoons,
When first you smiled on me and gave to my
Imaginings such imagery, when I
Would lie down at thy base as I
Do now. My feet have wandered far since then,
And over heights with prouder heads than thine,
Such as would name thy majesty with hills.
But I, Old Glen, my early mountain friend,
Am come with loyalty and heart still true
As thy bald crags are to their kindred ski.s.
My own Olympus yet and pride thou art,
With thy Thessalian gates of clouds
Which hide the great Olympian Hall,
Where Hebe still sweet nectar pours
Out to the gods. And murmurs sweet and low,
Of melting cadences, Apollo from
His magic lyre sends gently wandering
In soft succeeding measures, yet in air
To me.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And yet, Old Glen,
A stranger at thy base I lie to-day
To all but thee, save this soft yielding grass
And blooming waste, thy pageantry of flowers.
All these, with yon bald eagle circling in
The upper air with keen descrying for
Some timorous, skulking hare, are but old friends
Who laughed and played with me in childhood hours
Full many a Summer day, and told me tales
Of fairy lore. With such immortal friends
To welcome me again, what care I then
For yon rude plowman's stare and taking me
For some trespassing rake? This broad domain
Of circling hills and intervening vales
Is thine by ancient rights to shelter me,
And take me in thy lap when I have come,
With love, to worship thee. Before Rome was,
Or Greece had sprung with poetry and art,
Thy majesty with impartiality
Was here. The first soft tread of moccasin
On Indian feet, in ages none can tell,
That bent this yielding grass was thine to hear.
And all the sons of men who since have brought
Their pulsing hearts to thee with loves, with aches,
With tragedies, with childhood innocence,
Have had thy welcoming. To thee no race
May come with arrogance and claim first right
To thy magnificence, and mighty heart,
And thy ennobling grace that touches every
Soul who may commune with thee.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And so

It was Old Glen we came at first to love
In this soft scented air now long ago,
When first I brought my youthful heart to thee,
All pure with pulsing blood still hot
In its descent of years in tropic suns
And sands of Africa, to be caressed
By thee. And to your lofty heights you bore
Me up to see the boundless world beyond,
Which nothing then to my young innocence
Had aught of evil or deceptive paths.
With maddening haste I quit thy friendly side
To mix with men. And then as some young bison
Of the plain, which breathes the morning air
And restless snorts with mad excess of life,
And rushes heedless on in hot pursuit
Of what it does not know: So I, Old Glen,
As heedlessly went out from thee to meet
With buffeting, with hates, and selfishness,
And scorn. At first I stood abashed, disarmed
Of faith. Too soon I learned the ways of men,
Forgetting much I wish I had retained
Of once a better life. And in the fret
And fever of the endless strife for gain
I often sigh for thee, my native peaks,
And for that early life for me now past
Forevermore.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

But for one day, my early friend,
I am come back to thee again, to feel
Thy gentle grace so indefinable,
So subtle is thy touch, yet to the heart
A never-failing gift to all who come
To thee. And so it is, Old Glen, that I am come,
But not with all-believing innocence
As in those unsuspecting days of yore.
And O! Mount Glen, sin-stained my burning heart
With shame lifts up its face to thine, but with
A love as changeless as thy ancient crags
Does it still beat for thee. And I rejoice
To feel thy mighty heart here solace mine.
For when the day leads in the early dawn
With blushing rosy light and caroling
Of larks; and sleepy flowers half unclosed,
All wet with dew, unfold their buds and leaves,
There is enchantment in this lovely spot
Beyond, by far, all mortal utterances.
To come here then and lie down on thy side,
As I do now, and see the butterflies
Bobbing from flower to flower, and hear
The restless songs of birds as they in joy
Flit carelessly from bush and tree, is all
The bliss my heart could ask. Here I could lie
In such repose and let a lifetime pass.
And here, Old Glen, could I forget the fret
Of life and selfishness of men, and see
The face of him who is all beautiful.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And here in this perfume of May, and bloom
Luxuriant, and friendly rioting
Of green in all this blooming waste, is seen
A glimpse of that which He, the Lord of all,
Intended there should be with things and men
In all this earth, a thing which yet will be,
A universal brotherhood.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The legend of Tannhauser and Elizabeth lends itself readily to a story more human than any other of the Wagner-opera legends. The restlessness of Tannhauser which leads him into such ultimate misfortune, and Elizabeth's undying love and devotion to him, are exhibitions of pathos and tragedy instinct with human life. The dethronement of Venus by the acceptance of Christianity throughout the world, by which she was robbed of her divinity, and relegated to the realms of the lower world to become a sorceress, is not less sorrowful than that of the sorrowful Elizabeth. Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, was, according to the more ancient Greek conception, a daughter of Jupiter and Dione; but Hesiod says that she arose from the sea at the time of the wounding of Uranus and was therefore called by the Greeks, Aphrodite, the foam-born. Wafted by the west wind she was borne to the island of Cytherea, and afterward, like a dream, she passed to Cypress, where the grace of her beauty conquered every heart. She at once became the goddess of love and beauty, the goddess of gardens and flowers, of the rose, the myrtle and the linden. The heaths and slumberous vales, pleasant with Spring and the vernal breezes, were her's. She was the mistress of feminine charm and beauty, and ruled the hearts of men. Driven from her ancient kingdom, from the sunshine and the flowers of the upper world, it is no wonder that her heart grew hard, that we find her the wicked enchantress and sorceress that she is in the Venusburg, situated in the German valley of Thuringia.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The version of the legend of Tannhauser here given at the end is a liberty taken, but it seemed to me inconsistent after his chastening to have him consider a return to the Venusburg.

G. M. McClellan.

THE LEGEND OF TANNHAUSER AND
ELIZABETH.

I

THE VENUSBURG

In Germany the fabled Venusburg
A broad and fertile valley overlooked,
In fair Thuringia. The winds blew free
Along the mountain slopes, where shepherds watched
Their sheep, and played upon their pipes in sweet
Contentment all the day, beneath the blue
And arching sky. And in the valley rang
Often the cheery cry of noble knights
And jovial hunting parties on their way
To visit Wartburg castle, in which dwelt
The Landgrave, Herman, and his men-at-arms,
And his brave knights of fair Thuringia.
And with him dwelt his niece, Elizabeth,
The princess of the realm. The minstrel knights
And nobles, skilled in voice and on the harp,
Were wont to gather in the Landgrave's hall
And there contest in song. In this fine art
The sweetest singer of Thuringia
Was young Tannhauser, who, by his fair face
And wondrous melodies in song, had won
The heart of proud Elizabeth. And yet
This noble knight was dreamy in his mood
And restless in his life, dissatisfied,
And longed for change and new experiences.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And in this dreamy mood, with harp in hand,
He passed, one day, the grotto of the Venusburg.
The great enchantress of this fateful place
Put forth her magic spells and drew him on.
And when Tannhauser raised his eyes he saw
A country beautiful and strangely new.
As through a doorway seen, there flitted through
The gleaming, ever-changing, rose-hued mist
A countless throng of figures beautiful.
And heavy-headed flowers sent to him
Their all-compelling perfume through the air.
And far away he saw the misty lakes
Of magic blue. The sound of music came to him,
So strangely sweet it almost gave him pain
To hear. And in the midst of all there stood
The great enchantress, smiling, beckoning him
To come. So great her spell, he moved as in a dream,
Into the grotto passed, and fancied that
He heard a heavy door behind him clang.

For one long year, with ever changing scenes,
Tannhauser stayed within the Venusburg
And thought that he was happy there. The change
In shifting scenes, the wild bacchantes, and
The nymphs in mimic war, in graceful dance,
Afforded for his ever restless soul
The wild excitement which he craved. And for
His softer moods the chording voices of
The sirens satisfied. He breathed the scent
Of flowers wondrous sweet, and watched at times

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Dissolving mist-wreaths as they faded out
Their rosy hues: With Venus long he sat
At other times, and more and more she wove
Her spells which bound him fast to her. She taught
To him her songs of love, which he before
Had never heard, and dazzled by her charms
He worshipped her as did the world of old
When she was grand and true and gave
The gift of noble love to all humanity.
Tannhauser, now enthralled by magic spells,
Had long forgotten all his former life —
His friends, his love for fair Elizabeth,
His love for God, for Christ and righteousness,
And all the good and true which come to man
By sacrifice and overcoming sin
Were banished from his mind, so lost was he
To all the life within the Venusburg.

And yet, the restless nature of his soul
That led him into sin was destined to
Arouse him to his lost estate. One day
Tannhauser felt himself awake once more.
He fancied that he heard the clanging peals
Of church bells far away, and through his mind
There struggled back the long forgotten life;
The sun, the friendly glimmer of the stars,
The song of nightingales, the morning light,
The freshness of the earth, the skies above,
In memory came rushing through his mind.
In wild appeal to Venus now he cried:

THE PATH OF DREAMS

“Are these things lost to me?” And, rising from
Her couch, with quick though mild rebuke she bade
Him call to mind for her a scene less sad,
For she remembered well the world from which
She was dethroned and basely relegated to
This under-realm. Tannhauser, now aroused,
Felt all his restlessness, and would not be
Denied. In vain she wove about him now
Her magic spells. Tannhauser pleaded for
Releasement from her power, to live again
His former life, to know the natural joys,
The sorrows and the common things of earth.
In wrath she charged him with ingratitude
To her for all the lavished joys which she
Had given him. But when she saw in vain
Her wrath affected him, in softer tones
She promised him more perfect joys, and things
More beautiful. And while she spoke there came
From over all the dim blue lakes the soft
Caressing voices of the sirens in
Their wondrous harmonies. “My knight,” she cried,
“Why will you fly?” With stormy passion moved,
Tannhauser seized his harp and smote the strings,
And sang in mighty voice. He pledged to sing
When in the upper world, of Venus and
Her praise alone, but to that upper world
He now must go. The great enchantress saw
Her power on him now was gone, and bade him go.
Then in a moment flashed away from him
The Venusburg and all its wondrous spells;

THE PATH OF DREAMS

And, stretched full length upon the mountain side,
Tannhauser found himself too weak to rise
Up from the grassy slope at first. Confused
In mind, up to the wide blue sky he gazed,
While slowly came to him the memory
Of all his former life, the bitter truth
Of sin in going to the Venusburg.
And from the pasture lands below he heard
The sheep bells, where the peaceful shepherd lad
Lay playing on his pipes, and pausing now and then
To sing a song to Holda, goddess of
The Spring. Across the quiet valley came
The sounds of hunting horns, the baying of
The hunting pack with full excitement for
The chase, and stirred the lonely knight upon
The mountain side to full activity.
And soon the Landgrave and five minstrel knights
Drew near and recognized Tannhauser, and
With words of welcome and much kindness asked
Where he had been. "I wandered in strange lands,"
Tannhauser said. "I pray you question not,
But let me pass." The Landgrave saw his mood
And courteously forbore to further press
And question him, but pointed out how sad
Had been the princess, fair Elizabeth,
In his long absence from the hall, and asked
That he should join the coming revels of
The minstrelsy of song in Wartburg Hall.
With gladness in his heart he promised to
Attend. And now the heavens seemed to smile

THE PATH OF DREAMS

A pardon down on him, and sweet the wind
Blew softly on his face. "Elizabeth," he said.
The murmur of her name a sense of peace
And freedom-brought to him. And now once more
He humbly prayed to God that he might be
Forgiven for his sin, and find a peace
Of heart, and full acceptance in His sight.

II

THE CONTEST OF SONG AND LOVE

The Landgrave's gilded hall was all bedecked
In preparation for the minstrel knights
Who would contest in skill upon the harp.
Though named were all contestants long before,
Tannhauser's name was added to the list
In recognition of his marvelous skill
And, too, in honor of his coming home.
Before the minstrel hour the princess, fair
Elizabeth, came in the hall to feast
Her eyes upon the place where, long before,
Tannhauser's harp and voice awoke her heart
To such fond sympathy and ardent love.
When now at last he had returned her heart
Was beating fast with its tumultous joy,
And scarcely could await the hour when she
Could see her noble knight and hear his voice again.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

At last the hour arrived, and to the hall
The princess came. Her white, soft draperies,
Embroidered in rich colors, fell around
Her graceful form in many folds, and on
Her brow a crown of fretted gold proclaimed
Thuringia's princess, fair Elizabeth.
She was of northern birth, in coloring
Was fair, and had the clear blue eyes with which
The daughters of the cold and far north skies
So often are endowed. And for her hand
The prince, brave knights and nobles from afar,
Came suing ardently. To all of whom
She was unfailing kind, but ever proud,
And cold and stately in her pride, the pride
In generations of her noble blood.
One knight alone had touched her heart, and while
He was away she turned her back upon
The gayeties of the realm. But once again,
Now that he had returned, her spirit thrilled
With quickened heartbeats of her happiness,
And sent its sparkling gleams to her blue eyes.

Into the minstrel hall the noble knights
Came, bearing each his harp. Elizabeth
In queenly beauty stood with welcome smiles,
But yet with searching eyes for one above
All other knights. He came, by Wolfram led,
In through a doorway at the side. "Ah, there
She is,—the princess," Wolfram softly said,
And turned away, upon a pillar leaned

THE PATH OF DREAMS

All richly carved, and fixed his gaze upon
The quiet beauty of the vale without.
"O! princess fair!" he heard Tannhauser cry,
And then her voice, with love, which softly said,
"You must not kneel to me." He heard no more,
Save now and then a word, a phrase which filled
His heart with cold despair, for Wolfram, too,
The princess loved, but in his noble heart—
His heart as noble as his name—he now
Relinquished all his hopes for those he loved,
And who would find their joy in mutual love.

The Landgrave, smiling, came into the hall,
And in her joy Elizabeth herself
Threw in his arms, so great her happiness.
Together mounted they the royal seat
To wait the coming of the knights and guests,
All bidden to the feast of love and song.
Four pages called the guests as they arrived;
The Landgrave, with all stately courtesy,
The princess, with the utmost graciousness,
Made welcome there the knights and all the guests,
Arrayed in rich medieval dress. There stood
Behind them all the men-at-arms; also
The Landgrave's brave retainers lined the wall.
The swinging lamps revealed the columns rich
In carving. When the guests had all arrived,
The Landgrave stood and said the contest was
Of love in song, and he who won should have
The hand of fair Elizabeth, he pledged;

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Not doubting once that he would win in song
Who had already won Elizabeth
In ardent love. "All hail! Thuringia's lord!"
The minstrels cried in greeting to his speech.

Then came deep silence as the pages passed
The golden cup in which each minstrel dropped
A folded slip of paper with his name.
Then from the golden cup Elizabeth
Drew out a name and gave it to the page
Who raised his voice and cried,
"Herr Wolfram Eschenbach in song begin."
Upon his feet Von Eschenbach arose
And to his harp's soft rippling cadences
Began to sing: first of brave knights and to
Fair ladies present in the hall. Then to
Elizabeth his pent-up soul in song
Poured out the mighty passion of his love.
He sang in noble fervor to the star
Of love embodied in the princess fair.
Applause from all the guests and minstrels rang
Save from Tannhauser, seeming lost in dreams,
From which he did not rouse until the page
Announced his name as next upon the slip
Drawn by the princess from the golden cup.

He took his harp, but hardly knowing what
He did, for wild excitement seized his mind.
Once more rose-colored mists before his eyes
Arose, and voices whispered in his ears.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

He stood as blind, with throbbing heart, and swayed
As sways an oak with storm and tempest tossed.
"I, too, have seen the fount of love," he cried,
And then his vow, back in the Venusburg:
That Venus, when he sang, should be his theme,
Enchained his memory. He smote his harp
And sang with stormy music till the roof
With praise of Venus rang. Still higher rose
His voice in eulogy of fairest, then,
Of all enchantresses. At last he flung
Away his harp and cried, "I fly, I fly
Back to the Venusburg." Entranced, transfixed,
He stood, his harp unnoticed at his feet.

In horror-stricken tones the nobles cried,
"Hear him! Hear him! So to the Venusburg
This wandering knight has been. Press forward, all,
And in his blood bathe every sword." With cries
The ladies hastened from the hall, save fair
Elizabeth, who stood there shuddering
Betwixt her horror and her mighty love.
Increased the clamor and the great tumult
From every side as came the cry, "Kill him!"
And, pressing on, the nobles drew their swords
To do their deadly work. "Brave knights, stop" cried
Elizabeth; "Or else kill me. Stand back!"
Her tones were full of mingled love and deep
Despair, and yet surcharged with dignity
And stern command. The nobles all fell back,
Amazed to see their princess shield a wretch

THE PATH OF DREAMS

As was Tannhauser now. Her voice all full
Of piteous tragedy continued in
Her plea: "What is the wounds your swords could give
To this death-stroke which has been dealt to me?"
The nobles cried, "This fallen and false knight
You should be first indeed to scorn." She said,
"Why do you speak of me? Of this poor knight,
Of him and his salvation, you should speak.
This knight, by dreadful magic bound, can yet,
Through sorrow and repentance, break his chains,
And win forgiveness from the pitying Lord.
I plead for him, for his dear life I plead."

Tannhauser, softened by her pleading words
And his own deep remorse, bowed low his head
And wept. The knights, now softened by his grief,
More gently spoke, but still in deep reproach.
At last the Landgrave spoke with kindness and
Command, the course Tannhauser must pursue,
Because around him clung the magic spells
And dark enchantment lingered in his heart.
He must go forth and not return again
To fair Thuringia till his soul was free
From all the spells of Venus. He advised
Tannhauser to unite himself with pilgrims,
Then setting out for Rome to seek the Pope
And pray for pardon for their sins. And while
He talked there came from far without the chant
Of voices sweet and low, which brought a peace
And gentle rest into the minstrel hall,

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Which short before with strife and tumult rang.
Tannhauser heard the chant; with rising hope
And with a sudden impulse rose and said,
"I go to Rome." "To Rome!" the nobles cried.
The nobles, Landgrave and Elizabeth,
All cried with one loud voice to speed him on
From the great doorway of the Hall, "To Rome!"

III

THE PILGRIMAGE AND STAFF

Now full of hope and deep repentance too,
Tannhauser hastened on his pilgrimage
To Rome. The road was long and rough and full
Of weariness, with none to aid him save
His staff. But his own deep remorse, also
His reborn faith in God, his reverent love
Now for Elizabeth made easy all the way.
When other pilgrims through the meadows went
And sought the gentle paths, he turned aside
To bruise his feet in thorns and stony ways.
The wayside streams he passed and bore his thirst.
In silence and contrition pressing on,
He filled his mind with hope and noble thoughts
Of future deeds and life all free from sin.

At last when many days were passed he came
To Rome. The bells were pealing forth in joy,
And anthems filled the air in promise of

THE PATH OF DREAMS

The pardons for the weary pilgrim band,
As one by one they sought the presence of the Pope
And from him found the full assurance of
Forgiveness for their sins. Then came at last
Tannhauser's turn. In deep repentance now
He humbly knelt and told of all his sin:
The Venusburg, its dark and evil spells,
His wasted year, his fearful seizure in
The minstrel hall. For mercy now he begged
The Pope, and from enchantment to be freed.
But sternly spoke his papal lord, "If you
Have been into the Venusburg, and there
Enchanted by its magic powers and spells,
You will succumb again, and you may hope
For God's forgiveness when my staff puts forth
Green leaves." Struck dumb with grief and deep
despair

Tannhauser staggered forth. In hopelessness
He fell upon the ground and wished for death.
At last when he arose, the pilgrim band
Had passed its way toward home, and from afar
Its chorus of thanksgiving faintly reached
His ears. Tannhauser took his staff, alone
To wander on he knew not where, bereft
Of consolation, and of hope and love.

And far, far away in secret prayed
Elizabeth in agonizing love
To God that He might save Tannhauser's soul,
And bring him back to her from magic powers

THE PATH OF DREAMS

Redeemed. The year passed on and bringing near
The time the pilgrims must return from Rome.
Elizabeth more anxious grew; there spread
Upon her face a greater sign of fear
And growing sadness, which Von Eschenbach
Was quick to see. He sought to comfort her
With gentle words, and unobtrusive love,
And ever watchful care. Elizabeth
Was grateful for his deep solicitude
And love, but could not give him love for love.
Thus, day by day, down to the Virgin's shrine,
Where passed the pilgrims on their road from Rome,
She came to pray, until one day there came
Upon the wind the echo of a song
Which she well knew. "It is their song," she cried
With heart half bursting with its hope and fear,
Its pent-up agony and love. She strained
Her eyes to see the coming pilgrim band,
And of the band the pilgrim whom she loved.
Still onward came the pilgrims as they sang
Triumphantly of God—His mighty love,
And His forgiveness of their sins. And they,
Unseeing, passed her by while she saw them,
But saw not with them that dear pilgrim face
She sought. "No more will he return," she said,
And, with the wound of death upon her face,
She sought the palace hall to wait and die.
For die she must, she knew, without his love.
To see his face no more; to hear his voice
No more; was more than she could bear and live.

THE PATH OF DREAMS

A few more days were passed so quietly
None in the palace thought Elizabeth
Was near the end of life, or that her grief
And love were yet so great that she must die.
They thought her youth would yet assert itself
And time would bring a solace to her love,
And heal her broken heart. But scarcely was
The sun up from the glowing East when she
One morning called the Landgrave to her bed,
And all the household dear, and bade them all,
A last farewell. And while they wept for her
She closed her eyes and died. So gently did
She pass she seemed as one who slept.
And then Elizabeth was laid to rest
With swelling music, and with holy mass,
And gorgeous obsequies becoming to
Her princely race and noble line of kings.

Wolfram von Eschenbach stood on a hill
One day above the shrine more sacred now
To him because in prayer Elizabeth
Had knelt so often there. The twilight hour
Came on and brightly shone the evening star,
And as he watched he felt as if it were
The shining spirit of Elizabeth.
He struck his harp and softly sang a song
In which he made the lovely evening star
In its soft radiance to symbolize
Elizabeth in purity and love.
And, while he sang, he saw in ragged garb

THE PATH OF DREAMS

A pilgrim leaning hard upon his staff
As he approached, and on his haggard face
The marks of deep despair and hopelessness.
And when the pilgrim spoke he recognized
Tannhauser, whom he kindly welcomed home.
"Tell me the story of your pilgrimage,"
He said. Briefly Tannhauser told him all,
And said, "When I have seen Elizabeth
Once more, I leave this valley never to
Return again." "Alas," Von Wolfram said,
"Elizabeth is dead. She died for you.
In daily prayer for you and faithful love,
She pined her life away, and now a saint
In heaven she pleads with everlasting love
For you." Tannhauser fell upon the earth
With grief too much to bear. And while he lay,
Behold, swift messengers came from the Pope
And bore aloft the papal staff and sang
Of a great marvel wrought by God, for now
The staff put forth green leaves in token of
Tannhauser's full redemption from his sins.
The evening star in gentle radiance
Shone down upon the pilgrim's face at last
Reposing in the calm and peace of death.





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